

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Claims 1-9 (Canceled).

10. (Currently Amended) A purified polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid molecule selected from the group ~~comprising~~ consisting of:

(A) a purified nucleic acid molecule of sequence SEQ ID NO: 2;

(B) a purified nucleic acid molecule encoding the amino acid sequence SEQ ID NO: 1; and

(C) a purified nucleic acid molecule degenerate from SEQ ID NO: 2 as a result of the genetic code; ~~or~~

~~(D) a purified nucleic acid molecule that encodes a core+1 polypeptide or a variant of core+1 polypeptide, wherein the variant is detectable by Western analysis using HCV positive human serum or monoclonal antibody against core protein, and wherein the amino acid sequence of the variant shares at least 80% identity with a native core+1 polypeptide amino acid sequence.~~

11. (Original) A purified polypeptide according to claim 10 having a molecular weight of approximately 17.5 kD as determined by SDS-PAGE.

12. (Original) A purified polypeptide according to claim 10 in non-glycosylated form.

13-16. (Cancelled)

17. (Original) Purified antibodies that bind to a polypeptide of claim 10.

18. (Original) Purified antibodies according to claim 17, wherein the antibodies are monoclonal antibodies.

Claims 19-32. (Cancelled)

33. (Original) An immunological complex comprising a core+1 polypeptide of HCV and an antibody that specifically recognizes said polypeptide.

Claims 34-44. (Cancelled)